
On the Dialogics of the Architectonic Answerability: Is Architecture a Text?

MICHAEL HOLQUIST

TRANSCRIPTION OF A LECTURE IN BARCELONA IN JUNE 2013

Good morning. I'd like to begin by thanking Professor Muntañola for his kind and brave invitation to speak to you this morning. I say brave because it took courage, I think, to invite someone who knows as little about architecture as I do to address here.

This morning I'm going to be talking about Bakhtin *que* Bakhtin. What he thought during his lifetime. In the other talk I'm going to give, I will be discussing the implications of his ideas for the current situation. What happens in the digital revolution, what happens in an age of big data to dialogue? So this morning it's Bakhtin, Bakhtin.

So I began by saying that I don't know anything about architecture, but this is not the first time I've been in this embarrassing situation of addressing an audience of experts in an area where I am ignorant. Largely because Bakhtin has become a fashion in several academic disciplines, in philosophy, in anthropology, say nothing of literacies, etc., etc. But Bakhtin has also become an issue in the great world, so that a Hollywood film studio consulted with a business school, with economists who were interested in dialogism. So the idea of speaking across the disciplines is endemic now for anyone who is interested in Bakhtin.

It is not surprising that there is so much interest across a diverse array of disciplines in Bakhtin, largely because it's impossible to know what he himself did. What was his specialty, who was Bakhtin professionally, was he a literary scholar, was he a philosopher, was he someone who was a social thinker? It's difficult to pin him down to any specific discipline. If he were alive today, would he be appointed to an academic chair? It's not obvious that he would be, given this strange nature of his thought. But were he to be appointed to an academic chair, what would it be, would it be in literature, would it be in philosophy, would it be in history, would it be in one of the social sciences? It's difficult to say.

So there are reasons why he is so widely read, I believe, that inhere not only in the nature of his work, I mean, he wrote on many different issues, but also in the nature of the answer that he gave to the basic problems that he saw confronting his time.

So what I'm going to try to do is recreate some of the basic ideas of the overall philosophy of Bakhtin, which we might think of as dialogism, it's all about dialogue. I'm going to limit myself to the lifetime of Bakhtin, all ended in 1975. I want to get back to Bakhtin before he became *Bakhtin*, not as a self-righteous accuser of those who would incorporate him into unexpected new avenues of work in research. My intention, rather, is to look at Bakhtin's work within the context of his own life and environment as a way to generate a further dialogue across the disciplines.

One of the reasons I'm happy to be speaking to you today is because I think architecture is a profession that might more than many other areas benefit by being compared to the ideas of the living Bakhtin, and so what I'm going to do now is skip over some biographical detail. I'm not going to say anything about his life, but what you should know is that it was an extraordinary life. He managed in the Soviet Union to live to be 80 years old, which was a miracle, I mean, given the kind of work he was doing. So he lived through the Russo-Japanese War, he lived through the First Revolution of 1905, he lived through the Bolshevik Revolution, he lived through the Stalinist purges, the Second World War, an extraordinary life. And all of this was not simply background to his life, I mean, he was deeply involved in all of these great historical undertakings of the time.

Now, from the many projects, publications and ideas that Bakhtin worked on during his life, I'm going to limit, this morning, my commentary to four concepts that occupy Bakhtin's intention from beginning to the end of his life, and which are the most relevant for thinking about his relation to architecture. They are «metalanguage» or «translinguistics», «dialogue», «chronotope» and «text», he has a very special idea of what constitutes the text. After looking at these, I will suggest some of the ways that might be relevant to the profession of architecture as seen from a very innocent point of view. Before examining these topics in detail however, it's important to keep in mind that they all derive from Bakhtin's fixation on a core concern that underlies them all. That is, how to understand human beings as perceiving subjects, what is uniquely human about the way we make sense of our experience of the world. More specifically, his recurring topic is how to negotiate the gap that exists between the moment of «now», as experienced by a single individual, and all the other moments before and after the «now» in the course of his or her life.

He begins by assuming no observer has immediate access to his own or to another's «now». Everything that reaches us through our senses comes to our cognitive faculties from the

past. That is to say, the question is raised, how do we make sense of what is happening if we are condemned only to construct an event that has already passed? Bakhtin has met his life trying to answer this question. Understanding that there is no way completely to close the gap between event and perception, he nevertheless thought to achieve a maximum degree of possible immediacy. So the search for a clearer dialogue between event and perception inevitably deems questions about the role of space as well as time, and how we make sense of our experiences. In addition to the temporal problem of locating the subject in the «now», he grappled with the contradictions present in the peculiar site, the spatial «where», of the perceiving subject.

When thinking about the site of the perceiving subject, Bakhtin found himself confronted by a paradox. Every living human being, no matter how high or low his status in society, no matter how apparently isolated his place is on the map, every living human being occupies a place in existence that is uniquely his or hers, a place that is both physical and metaphysical. At the purely physical level, I cannot stand in the same portion of space you occupy at any given moment, because two separate bodies cannot occupy the same identical space. This uniqueness of place we carry with us throughout our lives, a truth we honor when we bury our dead in a site that we mark as theirs by placing their name above it, is a major puzzle for Bakhtin. Our position in space, wherever we are, is ours alone. Wherever I go, it is «I» who occupy a position that no one else at that moment occupies. This is such a simple fact that its importance is frequently overlooked. As Noam Chomsky says, «Wisdom begins by asking questions about what seems simple, what's obvious».

Bakhtin meditated the implications of positional singularity all of his life. The brute materiality of our bodies is what makes our claim to whatever particular space we occupy at any moment real. Everything in the world, animals, plants, and of course structures in the built environment, all occupy a unique spatial locus in this reductive material sense. Bakhtin's existential architectonics is an attempt to understand the implications of such placement for sentient creatures who are conscious of their radical specificity. For thinking subjects, the uniqueness in space is of course not merely a physical fact. At a higher level of speculation, how do we relate to the fact of our spatial uniqueness, how do we manage it, how do we make sense out of a world inhabited by other creatures who also occupied distinctive sights in existence? These are the architectonic questions that shaped the technics of response in specific events. Above and beyond the physical site my body occupies in space, what else is at work in how I define and how I am defined by my position in the world?

The great influence of Immanuel Kant in Bakhtin is most obvious in the degree to which Bakhtin assumes there is no space without time. So a first recognition is a necessary role of

narrative in the work of calibrating my place in existence. I must know my «when» as well as my «where» if I'm going to tell the story of who I am to myself and to others.

Questions growing out of Bakhtin's hypersensitivity to the ineluctable situatedness of human beings, the defining fact of their temporal and spatial uniqueness, is the subject he wrote about during the earliest most nakedly philosophical phase of his career, and the subject to which he returns again in his last essays just before he died in 1975.

Understanding the role of time/space in human existence is thus a lifelong project form, a task of much greater scope than his well-known analyses of literary work, especially the novel. Bakhtin did frequently turn to literature to create a better understanding of particular works of particular authors, such familiar Bakhtinian concepts as novelness and even chronotope are powerful tools in literary theory. But literature also serves Bakhtin as a laboratory or a workshop for exploring the mysteries of situatedness in human existence in life outside books. So he begins by assuming that each human person is unique and a non-recurring individual. And yet, in order for the radical singularity of his or her place in existence to have any meaning, it must be calibrated with the distinctiveness of other individuals who also occupy places in existence that are unique to them.

The paradox at the heart of dialogism is the truth that everyone is alone, but we are all alone together. There is a famous footnote in the chronotope essay citing Kant as the source of Bakhtin's recognition of the centrality of time/space in human consciousness, but Bakhtin marks an important difference between his approach and that of Kant. He says, I quote, «We differ from Kant in taking time/space not as transcendental, but as forms of the most real reality. He uses both the Western and the Russian word for «real» to emphasize that he's after the really real. Now, an ocean of ink has been spilt trying to untangle what Bakhtin meant by this term. One key to understanding what he meant by rejecting the metaphysical term «transcendent» is that we should rather think in terms of the more experientially based «transgredience».

It is a complex category, «transgredience», best explained perhaps by invoking another term Bakhtin frequently uses, «surplus of seeing». That is, I can see things from my unique place in existence that you cannot see. First of all from a simple positional perspective: I see cameras at the back of the room that you can't see, you see me and you can't see the cameras. So you have the same capacity to perceive objects behind my head that I cannot see. What I don't see exists in experiential reality, it's just not visible in the particular moment in the place from where I stand in space. To gather a more complete picture of our environment, we must overcome our collective «outsideness». «Outsideness» is the given condition of being a unique person. We must share information from my vision that is in excess of yours, and you

must share with me your vision that I cannot see in order for us to have a complete picture of what is around us. Conceived in this way the world is ineluctably dialogic, in the sense that what we perceive is always shared with others, first of all from our physical surroundings but by extensions to our site in existence, in intellectual space as well.

What is important for Bakhtin is the subject of how we are able to communicate what you know that I don't know, and what I know but you don't know. That's why language plays such an important role in dialogism. Because it is the instrument for orchestrating connections between subjects and the world, and it is the primary tool for negotiating a universe that is spatially perceived from my unique position in it. More compellingly, it is a universe in which my understanding of an event is always belated after the fact constructed. Bakhtin's term for this way of perceiving events is «dialogue», because the give-and-take of meaning in verbal exchanges best models the give-and-take of perception in a world where meaning is always a co-produced event.

The Russian word for «event» is *sobytie*, composed of the prefix *so* meaning «with» and the substitute *bytie* meaning «being». So *sobytie* is «with being» and Bakhtin takes full advantage of this make-up of the word, and more often than not he does not write *sobytie*, «event», but he rather expands the word to a phrase, *sobytie bytiia*, he says, the «co-event of existence». Words are understood as having meaning not because of the place they occupy in dictionaries or grammars but because of the role they occupy in spoken utterances.

Metalinguistics is Bakhtin's way, first of all, to distance what he means by language from language as it is understood by academic linguists. Metalinguistics encompasses both what Saussure called *lan* and what he called *parole*, the event of a particular utterance in this specific language. As such, it is the means for negotiating the distance between the poles of sense and reference, Frege's *Sinn und Bedeutung*. This is the difference that any speaker of English will think of when he hears me say the word «watch». And the different thing that he would think when I point to this watch [Holquist shows his watch to the audience] my particular watch, which is here and now in this moment, and not in the next moment. It occupies this space now. This also can be thought of as «watch» as well as the lexical general meaning of «watch».

The difference between the two senses is between a general dictionary definition and a very specific thing, that exists at this moment and nowhere else in any other time. Bakhtin's war with academic linguists derives from his conviction they deal only with aspects of language that can be systematized. Whereas in the event of being, the fullness of meaning comprises many more aspects than syntax, grammar, and so forth. Not only must the subtleties of intonation with which an utterance is pronounced be taken into account, but also every detail of

the setting. That is, is it a kitchen in which the utterance is made, is it a garden, is it a castle? The time of the day, the season of the year, the historical moment, all of these are participants in the moment of now as an utterance.

In order to form the daily miracle that is the prodigy of understanding, we must give ourselves over to the dialogic nature of metalanguage. We do not own words, they're not our possessions. We rent words from the abstract system of language for particular use in existentially unique encounters. That is, at a certain level we need patterns of the kind that are studied by linguists. But more importantly, for a truer understanding, we need the situation specific variations on those patterns that we deploy, and exchanges that we share with other persons in the surrounding locations and situations that frame our exchange.

This conception of understanding is the word, what Bakhtin calls the «deed», *postupok*, of communicating metalinguistically, expresses the action of subjects who occupy a specific space in time and existence, how they overcome the potential isolation of their uniqueness, and a major instrument for doing so is what Bakhtin calls the chronotope.

Now, chronotope has been one of the most frequently invoked items in the toolbox of dialogism. It remains, however, one of the most vexed categories in the Bakhtinian canon. There are words that are being pronounced over the meeting of chronotope. A recurring dilemma is the question, what precisely is the field of inquiry in which the term has its greatest relevance? It's clearly about time and space, but time and space as experienced, *where*? In literature or in real life experience outside books? It's a way to nominate time/space, but time/space as experienced by *whom*? By characters in fictional texts, by book's author, by the characters in books, by readers outside books? Is the chronotope a literary, or an anthropological, a metaphysical, an existential, or some other kind of category, such as architectural? Or does chronotope share boundaries with all these disciplines, and if so, how should we discriminate between their applications? There are many reasons for this confusion, beginning with Bakhtin's own expository imprecision in the long essay that he devoted to the subject in 1937. The title of that work in which the term chronotope was first used is, «Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel». That early version was never published. When it became possible some forty years later to print the essay, Bakhtin became dissatisfied with his earlier narrowly literary definition of that term. So in 1973, two years before he died, Bakhtin added a new set of «concluding remarks» to his earlier text in which he expanded the concept to include the reading not only of novels, but in the supplement he argues chronotope is the way we make sense not only of fictional plots, chronotopic thinking is at work to shape time and space in any act of perception. In so doing, he defines the world as text, and a chronotope is an instrument for rendering that text legible.

Sadly, these later editions, instead of clarifying the issue, have really served to compound the difficulties of defining chronotope. I hope that what I've already said about the central role of dialogue in Bakhtin's worldview will help to make clear the chronotope is a concept larger than any strictly literary application of it. While the examples Bakhtin gives in his 1934 version of the essay are useful for categorizing the structural differences between various kinds of literary text, from the ancient Greek novel to detective stories of action adventures that were published yesterday or this morning, these texts are most useful in specified relation of chronotope to human perception itself in a later work he had.

Keep in mind that another major essay Bakhtin wrote during the 1930s is devoted to what he calls speech genres. Speech genres are the rules that determine speech in particular situations and indicate boundaries where utterances should begin and end. I mean, quite simply, in a military setting anything beyond a sharp «halt» when ordering soldiers to stop would be excessive, or when casually meeting an acquaintance on the street, when we say, «how are you», it would be in excessive the genre to receive a detailed medically precise account of the other person's physical condition.

The structures that govern what is appropriate in everyday communication illustrate the degree to which all utterance is subject to rules. The rules legislating literary genres are merely more complicated than those in daily life, which is not to say that ordinary communication is not complicated. The exchange between the give-and-take at a railroad station information booth they are maximally codified and relatively close to invention, but an exchange between two good friends, having a heart-to-heart talk or a glass of good wine at two o'clock in the morning, could be almost as intricate as those in a sonnet or a novel.

The important thing to remember is the chronotope is a way to fuse two different aspects of space/time into a relationship of simultaneity. The best way to conceive how this action is performed, I think, is to begin by assuming that any act of perception must disregard certain aspects of experience out of the tsunami of impulses that constantly rush at our senses. At the same time, perception must isolate other details in senses that are meaningful. This is how we navigate at the ocean of sensations that Kant termed the «manifold». Bakhtin suggests that our perception puts order into the never-ending storm of sensations by turning them into a story that we can understand. As I've said, it's sometimes difficult to know whether Bakhtin is talking about reading fiction in a novel or interpreting signals from the experienced world in perception. The reason for this confusion is that he uses many of the same procedures involved in both. In each case we structure the potential chaos of signals the brain perceives as a narrative in our minds.

Chronotope is an encompassing term for specific ways in which we give shape to the two poles of time in any narrative. These poles are best known in terms that were first used, not

by chance by the way, by the Russian formalists, *fabula* and *syuzhet*, or «story» and «plot». There is a difference between «story» and «plot». That is to say, the idea is simple, every narrative has a purely chronological dimension, one, two, three, four, in which events are organized according to the order in which they occurred. This we may call the story aspect of narrative, but the meaning of the story is usually not contained in the brute series of events. That series needs to be tinkered with, given a shape that is not merely the linear course of time. A crude example is, «The king died and then the queen died», a series organized by chronology alone. One of several meanings such a story might have can be grasped if we say, «The queen died of grief today because the king died yesterday», inverting the order, a shift that indicates the semantic weight is on the queen's grief, not the death of the king.

It is the dialogic ability of chronotope to fuse the poles of plot and story into a dialogic simultaneity that accounts for its hermeneutic power, when we seek to understand a novel, an event, an utterance, or, a building, I think. For Bakhtin then, chronotope is subsidiary to the larger category of text. He says in a late essay, «Where there is no text, there is no object of study, and no object of thought either». This may remind some of Derrida's famous, «*il n'y a pas de hors-texte*». Bakhtin's capacious vision of text does not exclude, rather he argues that the underpresence of text derives from each particular text's dialogic interconnectedness to everything else. He sees each text as a world that in itself reflects all texts within the bounce of a given sphere, the interconnection of all ideas since all are realized as utterances. Each text always has features, this is important, that are repeatable, and other features that are unrepeatable, and the trick is how to put these two levels together. He comes close here to a similar distinction that Roland Barthes made in his famous 1971 essay entitled, «From Word to Text», where a word is understood as a thing, an object, a fragment of substance occupying a sort of space, and text is defined as the product of understanding.

Text implies that the subject of study is something to be approached through reading. The connection between the brute word, a novel, or a building and its interpretation by a perceiver is language read. Bakhtin himself has very little to say about how to read buildings as such, but there are of course many others who do. I mean, language has become, even for a total outsider to architectural history, as I am, its clear that language, the language metaphor has become a major issue in thinking about architecture in the 20th century. Even in the 19th century John Ruskin claimed that the architecture of a nation is great only when it is as universal and established as its language. Louis Sullivan was even more emphatic about the connection between language and buildings. He said, «Architecture is a superb language where-with man has expressed, through generations, the changing drift of his thoughts». In the 20th century from at least the 1970s, structuralism and deconstruction played a role in architectural history, something I don't have to repeat for this audience. While architects like Peter Eisenman derived much of their theory from techniques originally framed within a

literary context, Derrida and Paul de Man still understood language as professors of linguistics such as Saussure and Roman Jakobson understood language. To a rank outsider, such as I am, the reason history of architecture seems to be obsessed with the language metaphor is framed by those who made a professional claim to the knowledge of language. They were studying, they were thinking linguistics.

As a philologist, I find this all a bit strange. Derrida was frequently in residence in Yale during the years he was working with Peter Eisenman, and I was there, and I was never able to see the connection between what they said about the constructions they were discussing and the constructions themselves, I mean, there was an enormous gap between the design and what they were saying about that design. And I hope I don't offend anyone in the audience if I say that I love Paris but not Bernard Tschumi's Parc de la Villette.

But there is another vision of language that might be involved in using it as a metaphor for reading architecture. I believe Bakhtin's version of meta- or translinguistics, formulated to oppose thinkers such as Saussure or Jakobson, offers as a dialogic option. But in order to make my point, I wish first to suggest four obvious objections to equating a building with a written text, so understand, what I'm now going to do is list four reasons why talking about reading a building may be the wrong way to go, at all.

The first is the most obvious. A building is a material thing, an object in space made out of stones or logs, and one day we must deal in concrete but they are just as removed from the immaterial semiotics of natural language as the stuff of any other building.

Two, as a thing a building is in itself inert, it has a static relation to time. The material of its construction may deteriorate, it may be buried under sand, it may be rebuilt, destroyed and rebuilt, but compared to other texts, it is stuck in one place as books and art objects are not. The rootedness in its site makes the architectural objects' relation to time at least problematical. All words change their meaning over time, the bible can be read as a literary text in history, if you don't live in Texas, but the sheer materiality of a building, its naked purposiveness complicates its perception over time. The relation between what the building was meant to express when it was constructed is different from other text types due to this inertness. It complicates the creation of chronotopically organized readings of it.

Three, if we were to conceive a building as a text, who would be its author? The obvious answer is, in this audience, the architect, right? But if someone who lives in the shadow, in Manhattan, of the new World Trade Tower, I know that there is a long and rocky road between an architect's dream and a building that exists when it is finally constructed. How can we conceive the singularity of a creator so compromised by mediation, how separate the skin

of intensions, how evaluate responsibility among the various levels of power and play in the construction of a building?

Four, finally architecture is both a technology and an art. What is the aesthetic status of an architectural construction, even if you can see that it can be read like a text? How do you decide whether it's a good text or a bad text? Aesthetic considerations, the criteria that make such judgments possible with literary texts, are compromised in architecture by the ineluctable utility that drives architecture. The first of such criteria since the 18th century invention of modern aesthetics, at any rate, is that an aesthetic object must have no practical purpose. A great work of art according to Kant, must have, in his famous phrase, «purposiveness without purpose», *Zweckmässigkeit ohne Zweck*. It must be an end in itself in order to be an aesthetic object. But buildings always have a purpose even if they are a folly. Thus, even if you could read a construction like a poem or a novel, or even a painting or a statue, you'd have to find some different method for judging the aesthetic work of that architectural text. Those are the four objections, and they seem to me to be fairly formatable, so are they powerful enough to exclude Bakhtinian readings?

All the above, objections, render the metaphor of reading a building problematic because they are based on misconceptions about the nature of language. If we look at them again in light of Bakhtin's *metalinguistics*, the possibility of perceiving a building as a text becomes not only possible, but I would argue necessary.

Like other texts, a building will of course have a material aspect much as books have paper and digitized messages come to us through machines of one sort or another. This is only one aspect of the text especially when conceived as an utterance. The problem with conventional academic linguistics is that it thinks that language itself is material, not the real living shifting dynamic we use to create discrete individual utterances. If perception itself is dialogized, as Bakhtin argues, then even the most inert material comes to life in the dialogue that opens when those who speak a human language regarded as a text. There are no silent stones in the mind of a subject who renders the environment meaningful by incorporating it into the conversation of life. So the objection to the language metaphor in understanding architecture does not stand if we recognize that it do anything else, is perceptually impossible for human beings.

The objection that the sheer inertness of a building is pervasive materiality makes it difficult to express a non-physical meaning and that complicates the task of reading it as a text. It can also be overcome from the point of view of metalinguistics. While Bakhtin was heavily influenced by Kant, as I've said, there is more than a hint of Hegelian historicism in his dialogism. This is especially obvious in his various attempts to write a history of the novel as stories. What

such histories make clear is that Bakhtin felt that no matter how fixed a text might be, it nevertheless is subject to the laws of dialogic perception, meaning that the same object can be expected to have quite different meanings in different times. This may seem unremarkable, I'm sure it is, but if you add to this insight Bakhtin's emphasis on the urgency of the present moment in human perception, the constant insistence on being at a «now» moment in time, the sheer givenness of a made construction from the pyramids to the latest skyscraper is revealed as no hindrance to historically conflicting interpretations.

Three, the question of who is the author of a building is more complicated. Every great building has many authors of course, from the patron to the humblest workman who was in the building. Classical linguistics has little to offer here because it dreams of authors who have monolingual control over their texts. The poster boy for this is Flaubert who said, «I am the God of my novels, I made them, and only I». Saussure's famous diagram of two talking heads with arrows going from one and then back to the other is a postery illustration of this monologic fallacy that there is control from the subject of everything that he means. The idea of shared authorship, on the other hand, is a keystone of dialogism. Bakhtin conceives dialogue as shared work, a deed. If the construction process is conceived as a conversation, it need not diminish the importance of the participant who's a central participant in what is after all an ongoing multilevel exchange.

Four, and this is where I'm winding up, finally how do we meet the objection that architecture is fated always to be a purposive undertaking? Can we evaluate its productions as works of art if those productions are always realized to meet a function, to be a post office, a family dwelling, or a concert hall? I think the beginning of an answer to this question can be found in a recurring feature of projects dreamt by utopian architects such as Bolay, Ledoux or Lebbeus Woods. It's not by accident that Bolay's tomb for Newton or Lebbeus Woods' tomb for Einstein are projected into a space that is infinite, that is, in space that is cosmic space. That is to say they are going beyond making something than a mere resting place for a great science.

A put example is Ledoux' well-known cemetery for his town of Chaux. He begins by designing a huge vault with many chambers that could actually be built, but he ends with a vision, and this is what is important, the difference between the vault and the vision. The vision is the cosmic depiction of the earth surrounded by other planets, all big in sunlight among the clouds. Ledoux' vision here is poignant evidence of one architect's desire to escape the limits not only of earthly space but of sheer utility, the artistry in the utopian but ultimately driven reality of the salt mines that show. But Ledoux is still conceiving his work as a monologic utterance. He dreams of being amid the clouds because he wishes to be free of the time/space he shares with all the others who are necessarily involved in bringing his dream to a fruition. As a

glorious example of Gaudi makes clear, wonderful dreams can be dialogically realized even in a puzzling modern city with all the competing interests that are to be found in such a site.

So, to conclude, focusing on the individual persons, unique time and space was the way to bring home the meaning of his ethical challenge. We have no alibi in existence. Something that he had over his bed as he died, it was next to the photo of his dear wife, it was this phrase of his, «We have no alibi in existence», what did he mean? It means we're responsible, we not only have a unique time and space, but we are responsible for that time and space. Responsible in two senses, one is to place from which we respond, but it's also the place for which we take responsibility. It's something that we have ethically been charged to manage. We are the managers of our existence. So, the duo meaning of responsibility is what explains the distinction between good and bad in dialogistic settings. Everything that conduces to openness, to the recognition of the sharedness of meaning is good. Everything that supports the fiction of monologue, monistic thinking, from dictators to dictionaries are not a setting, they are not good.

There seems to be, to me, an ethics of answerability in architecture that could be applied as well as in life. Thank you.